



## Activity 9

### Follow a Fossil

*Students learn about the entire process of fossil preservation from field work to the museum display.*

*This activity is available from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science*  
<http://www.dmns.org/main/minisites/fossil/index.html>

Guiding Questions: What are the main steps of fossil collection?

Critical Content: Fossil collection includes prospecting, excavation, preparation, curation, research, and exhibiting.

Grades: 6-8

Duration: 60 minutes

Group size: individuals or groups depending on computer availability

Setting: classroom with Internet access

Background: Many museums support paleontology expeditions and fossil research. The paleontologist who discovered the hadrosaur print in Aniakchak National Monument, Tony Fiorillo, works for the Dallas Museum of Nature and Science. The Denver Museum of Nature and Science describes the process of finding new fossils and exhibiting them in a museum.

Materials:

Internet access

Vocabulary:

Fossil

Vertebrate

Invertebrate

Paleontology  
Prospecting

Excavation

Preparation

Curation

Research

Exhibiting

Procedures:

1. Assign students into three groups: vertebrates, invertebrates and plants
2. Have students go to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science's [Follow a Fossil](#) website
3. Students will read about hunting vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant fossils depending on their group assignment. Students may read the pages alone or in groups.
4. As a class, review the Discussion Questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the six steps of fossil hunting described by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science?
2. What do paleontologists do in each step and where do they do it: in the field or in the museum?
3. How do the steps differ for vertebrates, invertebrates and plants?